

Will continue to support the rights of the Pak refugees: BJP

JAMMU, DEC 31 /- / BJP today condemned Hurriyat and other political parties for opposing the grant of domicile certificate to the West Pakistani Refugees residing in Jammu and Kashmir and said it will continue to support the rights of the WPRs. "Hurial called by Hurriyat and other separatist groups yesterday to oppose the grant of domicile certificate to WPRs is very unfortunate, unwarranted and uncalled for. BJP strongly opposes the efforts of these pro-Pakistan elements to politicise a humanitarian issue," BJP state spokesperson Brij Anil Gupta (retd) said. He condemned the attitude of Hurriyat and political parties who are opposing the grant of domicile certificate to the WPRs residing in the state and said what was more disconcerting is that these people belong to economically backward areas. "Development of the society and have been denied the growth opportunities due to

no fault of theirs." It is very unfortunate that a section of society living among us is termed as refugees and denied domicile certificate. It is also clear that they are not the state subjects and have migrated from West Pakistan at the time of partition," he said. Even after 70 years of independence they are being given this treatment in their own country due to the "parochial outlook" of the majority community in the state is tragic, Gupta said. "It is the influx of illegal Bangladeshi and Burmese migrants that has resulted in the demographic change and ironically they do not raise any voice against them but welcome them." "This highlights their complete lack of outlook. Our party will continue to support the WPR and ensure that justice is delivered to them," he said. Taking a dig at the Nationalist Congress Party, Gupta said political parties like NC are misquoting history and trying to mislead

the people of Jammu using the name of late Maharaja Hari Singh. "Their contention that State Subject laws were enacted by the Maharaja to safeguard the interest of Dogras is being quoted out of context." "The State Subject Act was enacted by the Maharaja in 1927 to protect the rights of its citizens when J&K was an independent state. It was the Maharaja only who had acceded the state with India in 1947 and it was his desire that his state should be a part of Union of India," he said. He said, "All citizens of J&K are now citizens of India." Had the Maharaja been alive he would have himself ensured that any law that keeps his state away from rest of the country should be "abrogated", the spokesperson said. "He would have ensured that these helpless people are given all rights immediately and they would not have to suffer this humiliation for 70 years," he said. It was surprising and unfortunate that parties which had included this issue in their election manifestos in the past were now opposing the issue of the domicile certificate. "The statements of Ambika Soni in Jammu and Congress spokesperson Meem Afzal in Srinagar clearly show that the Congress was only exploiting them for narrow political gains and now that their plight is being improved by the present BJP government they have joined hands with the Hurriyat and others to oppose the same." Issue of domicile certificate will enable the WP refugees to seek central government jobs including in the armed forces. There will be quotas for them in the 5 IRP Battalions being raised under Prime Minister Special Package for J&K," he said. The contention that it is an attempt to change the state's demography, Gupta said it is not understood as to how it will affect the demography of the state since they have been staying here since 1947. (PTI)

Will wipe out drug menace from Punjab within 4 weeks: Capt Amarinder

NEW DELHI, DEC 31 /- / of Hitting out at Arvind Kejrival, Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh today said the AAP national convener was trivialising the state's drugs problem to divert the attention from substance abuse charges against his party's leaders. "AAP workers are themselves making allegations of drugs abuse against their party leaders, many of whom are caught in corruption and sex scandals. Kejrival was now resorting to diversion tactics by indulging in blatant lies against the Congress," Singh said. Rebutting Kejrival's allegation of drug peddling against Congress, the former Punjab chief minister said the AAP leader was resorting to falsehood in a desperate bid to divert the attention from drug abuse charges against his party's leaders. Congress is committed to fight the drug menace in Punjab and the state party chief is committed to wipe out drugs from Punjab within four weeks of assuming power, a statement from the party said. Singh also blamed Kejrival for ditching the people of Punjab on key issues such as Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal. Again challenging Kejrival for an open debate on issues vital to Punjab's interest, Singh said he was ready to debate him on all issues - including drugs and SYL. "Kejrival should debate instead of making unfounded allegations and resorting to cheap gimmickry," Singh added. The people of Punjab want Kejrival to convince them of their seriousness in the matter, especially given his track record of changing his mind 10 times a day, he claimed adding that the AAP leader should make his stand clear on the drug problem in the state. (PTI)

Brace up! Wet, cold January in offing

NEW DELHI, DEC 31 /- / After an unusually warm November and December this season, January is expected to be cold and wet due to formation of three western disturbances expected in the month, bringing sudden rain and snowfall to north India. A strong western disturbance is expected between January 3-7, which should bring moderate-to-heavy snowfall over hills in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. At the same time, an intense cyclonic circulation over Haryana is likely to shower light-to-moderate rain in Punjab and Haryana between January 6-10. Delhi may receive light rain on January 6 or 7.

According to Mahesh Palawat, chief meteorologist at Skymet, a private weather forecasting agency, fog is expected over the 255 million hectare Indo-Gangetic plains till January 2 and 3. Bihar and Jharkhand may receive light rain on January 1 and 2. Dense fog and cold conditions will continue in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and parts of Haryana, north Rajasthan and Delhi. Another western disturbance is expected between January 17-20. "During that period we expect moderate snowfall over the hills and scattered rains over Punjab, Haryana and north Rajasthan," Palawat said. A western disturbance is an extra-tropical storm originating in the Mediterranean region that brings sudden winter rainfall to the north-western parts of the Indian subcontinent.

January's last western disturbance could happen between January 27-29, which will be instrumental for a good snowfall in the hills and light rain in parts of Punjab and Haryana. The weak winter temperatures have been unusually warm due to occurrence of the La Nina pattern and global warming. The IMD, in its forecast, has predicted a warmer winter this year. (PTI)

Company shortlisted for supplying plastic blacklisted: Chandy

KOCHI, DEC 31 /- / Former Kerala Chief Minister Omomen Chandy today said one of the four companies said to have been shortlisted for supplying plastic notes appeared to be "blacklisted" which he felt smacks of corruption. Producing portions of a copy of a report of the Public Undertakings Committee of Parliament in 2013, he alleged that the company was named in it for not meeting certain security parameters for printing 1365 million pieces of Rs 100 notes during 1997-98. The parliamentary panel, then chaired by Jagadambaika Pal, had cited grave implications of such move and fervently emphasised that outsourcing of printing of currency notes/minting coins should never be resorted to in the future,

Chandy said. "Now, a company against which a Parliamentary committee had given a report in 2013, has been roped in by the Government for supplying plastic notes. It is a big scam. A joint parliamentary committee should probe it," Chandy said in a Malayalam note distributed at his press conference here. He said the parliamentary panel has noted that the very thought of India's currency being printed in two different countries is alarming to say the least. With Congress leader and Parliament's Public Accounts Chairman K V Thomas by his side, Chandy cited newspaper reports, claimed that the banknote manufacturer was earlier "blacklisted" by the Union Home Ministry (PTI)



Supporters of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav sitting on dharma near CM's residence in Lucknow on Saturday.

Puducherry govt will work for balanced development in 2017: Narayanasami

PUDUCHERRY, DEC 31 /- / Chief minister V Narayanasamy today vowed to ensure that all the four regions of the Union Territory witnessed balanced development in all sectors in 2017. In his New Year eve message, he said various development oriented programmes had been set in motion during 2016 and they would be

sustained and carried on further so that a balanced development was achieved in the four regions of Puducherry Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam. Narayanasamy, heading the Congress ministry, said his government would spare no efforts to register industrial development in the new year and said the cooperation of the people was absolutely necessary from all sections. Puducherry Assembly Speaker V Vaithilingam, Ministers, Leader of the Opposition N.Ranganasamy of AINRC, MLAs, MPs, and leaders of various political parties extended their greetings on the eve of New Year to the people. (PTI)

Heart surgery performed on 3 children from Liberia

KOCHI, DEC 31 /- / Three children from Liberia, who arrived here with congenital heart defect, have undergone free heart surgeries successfully at a private hospital here, recently. Lisie Hospital, pioneer in the field of cardiac care in the state, said as a gesture of goodwill it has joined hands with Moolan Foundation and Rotary Club of Cochin Global to perform free heart surgeries for the three children. The hospital in a release said today it has added another feather to its cap by providing "Care with Love" to children with heart disease from Africa. The children, aged from seven months to eight years, were under the treatment of Dr

QUICK CROSSWORD

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- Across**
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3. Russian emperor (4)
7. Small bunch of flowers (4)
8. Gramophone needle (6)
10. Shameless woman (7)
13. Amused (7)
16. Winding ski course (6)
17. Read through superficially (4)
18. Be partial to (4)
19. Obscured (6)
- Down**
1. Deceive (4)
2. Button up (6)
4. Window ledge (4)
5. Struggle against (6)
6. Smear (7)
9. Dictionary (7)
11. Crumb (6)
12. Reached maximum (6)
14. Set of playing cards (4)
15. Portent (4)

Previous solution
Across: 1. Affluence, 6. Satin, 7. Vodka, 9. Ills, 10. Relent, 12. Goblet, 14. Clip, 17. Equal, 18. Soapy, 19. Dehydrate.
Down: 2. Fatal, 3. Line, 4. Enriled, 5. Cadge, 6. Shingle, 8. Autopsy, 11. Medley, 13. Brute, 15. Least, 16. User.

SUDOKU: 2431

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Yesterday's Solution 2430

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3	2	1	9	5	4	6	8	7
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6	1	7	3	2	5	9	4	8

K'taka has released Rs.862 cr for drought relief: Siddaramaiah

BENGALURU, DEC 31 /- / Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah today said the state government has released Rs 862 crore for drought relief measures. "We are not sitting quiet waiting for funds from the central government. We have already released Rs 862 crore for drought relief measures," Siddaramaiah said. He said 400 crore has been released for drinking water and fodder for cattle, and Rs 325 crore is already available with the District Deputy Commissioners. Maintaining that the state was reeling under severe drought, the chief minister said there is scarcity of drinking water with no adequate water in reservoirs and lakes being dried up. "District Deputy Commissioners have been directed to take adequate measures in ensuring the availability of drinking water and fod-

der for cattle," he told reporters. Karnataka is reeling under successive years of drought, and the state government has already declared 139 taluks in 29 districts as drought hit. The Chief Minister had earlier said the state has incurred an estimated loss of Rs 25,000 crore this year due to severe drought. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had yesterday assured the all-party delegation led by Siddaramaiah that a decision on release of Rs 4,702 crore drought relief to Karnataka for kharif crop loss in 2016 will be taken on January 4. Speaking about the meeting with the Prime Minister, Siddaramaiah said in a few districts there was damage to crops due to floods, for which Rs 396 crore had been sought as relief. Pointing out to the deficit rainfall, he said

Lokayukta Police deposits Rs 1.61 cr in old notes as FDs

INDORE, DEC 31 /- / Lokayukta Police has converted Rs 1.61 crores, seized in now banned Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 denomination notes in the last 10 years, into fixed deposits as per Madhya Pradesh High Court order. "We have deposited Rs 1.61,56,000 cash seized during raids at various premises of government officials and deposited it as fixed deposits at a nationalised bank," Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Lokayukta Indore, B S Pathan said. The amount was seized in connection with 30 cases of alleged corruption in the last one decade.